

# INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTO HIGHER EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES) IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA: APPROACHES FOR THE DEVELOPING OF NEW PEDAGOGIES

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to highlight the aspects of integration of entrepreneurship into higher education (Educational sciences) in Lithuania and Latvia. The article examines the nature of challenges for entrepreneurial teaching and explains how experience-based pedagogies can develop learning environments that replicate aspects of entrepreneurship. The article describes the empiric study, which explored 32 student opinions on entrepreneurship in Educational sciences. The implications of the article could be useful for university educators, who seek to educate students most effectively with a real intention to become entrepreneurs.

**KEY WORDS:** entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship pedagogies, higher education, Educational sciences.

## Introduction

Nowadays entrepreneurship is considered to be the effective strategy for development and growth of societies since it leads to technical and innovative changes and causes economic growth as well as converts the new knowledge to modern products and services. That is very important for Lithuania and Latvia, who are currently moving towards innovation driven society model. According to Lisbon strategy for growth and employment, the important role of higher education in promoting entrepreneurial skills is now widely recognised. The article is based on the working definition provided by Gibb (2013): “Entrepreneurship in higher education is designed to empower staff and students to demonstrate enterprise, in-

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novation and creativity in research, teaching and studying as well as pursuit use of knowledge across boundaries.”

The idea of the integration of entrepreneurship into higher education is especially relevant for Baltic countries, which have the similar historical background, transition period and traditions in higher education, and are currently seeking to re-arrange their educational systems. Moreover, the process of rapid economic convergence of European Union countries forces the higher education in Baltic countries to be competitive not only on local market but on international market as well. That means that universities in Lithuania and Latvia have to re-think their models of the preparation of the graduates, as well as of organising the study process and research work. The tendency stressed by comparative research data (*Entrepreneurship in Latvia and other Baltic Countries*, 2013; *Entrepreneurship in Education in Baltic Sea Region*, 20015) is that Lithuania and Latvia's universities and higher education system on the whole should take steps toward changing their classic role, which was merely producing knowledge towards entrepreneurship universities, which produce knowledge and create ideas and also transfer them to action in alignment with process of local, regional and international economic development.

However, it is pointed that Lithuania still lacks a clear strategy of entrepreneurship integration into higher education. The same problem has been identified in Latvia's higher education system (*Entrepreneurship within Non-business studies*, 2010). The context analysis of Baltic countries' higher education systems shows that the overall situation with the spread of entrepreneurship in higher education is generally very weak. The overall teaching of entrepreneurship in higher education is quite poor, especially within non-business and non-economic courses. In Lithuania noteworthy entrepreneurship teaching examples can be found, however higher education curricula even in business studies often lack coaching on how to start one's own business and acquire relevant skills. In Latvia entrepreneurship courses are missing in non-economic fields of study, and more generally inter-disciplinary approaches are rare. The low level of entrepreneurship-related abilities, knowledge and skills in the Lithuania and Latvia's universities has prompted the idea of current research.

The current research is focused on the integration of entrepreneurship into Educational sciences and covers various aspects of the issue (Melnikova, Zascerinska, 2014; Melnikova, Zascerinska, 2015a; Melnikova, Zascerinska, 2015b). In many countries entrepreneurship in non-business studies is a very new issue. In Lithuania and Latvia Educational sciences like many other social sciences and humanities traditionally are considered as less practical and applied (Dombrovsky, 2012). Entrepreneurship subjects and creating business on them are considered less important in spite of their strong base in developing ideas. However, as recent piece of research (Melnikova, Zascerinska, 2015b) reveals, Educational sciences in Lithuania

and Latvia are presently under pressure: on the one hand, Educational sciences are particularly conservative due their traditional mission; on the other – Educational sciences have to equally compete with other branches of science in the fields of academic achievements, research recognition and outcomes, skills of graduates, etc. In the context of Educational sciences the concept of social entrepreneurship has been emerged.

The focus of this paper is on the development of new pedagogies of entrepreneurship in Educational sciences especially those based on experiential learning. Experiential learning has risen to the forefront of entrepreneurship education, as universities respond to research that encourages both real-world projects and extra-curricular learning activities to better teach entrepreneurship, such as internships, business plan competitions etc. (Holmann, 2002). Therefore the methods of experiential learning could become a basis for developing entrepreneurship teaching pedagogies in Educational sciences. Hence the implications of the article could be useful for university educators, who seek to educate students most effectively with a real intention to become entrepreneurs. The methods used in the article are: analysis of scientific literature, analysis of empiric study data.

## **1. The challenge for entrepreneurial teaching in Educational sciences**

One of the recent pieces of current research (Melnikova, Zascierinska, 2015), which Master degree students in Educational sciences (Education management) from Lithuania (N=18) and Latvia's (N=22) universities were involved in, disclosed the students' opinion on entrepreneurship in higher education and their needs for entrepreneurship competences. The tendencies highlighted were as following: students enter Master degree programmes because they have intentions to make new career decisions (81% and 92% respectively); students need Master degree because they are designing their career paths (100% and 100% respectively); students intend to start a business (41% and 64% respectively); students enter Master degree programmes according to their business perspectives (77% and 88% respectively); students, who enter Master degree programs, have expertise in business (66% and 94% respectively); students are eager to share ideas during the study process, build networks, create business plans and start their companies during the studies or as soon as possible after graduation (50% and 70% respectively). The highlighted tendencies emphasize students' need for entrepreneurship competences that should be developed during study process.

However, another piece of current research (Melnikova, Zascierinska, 2014) reveals the fact that in Lithuania and Latvia's universities academic staff in Educational sciences lacks competence in the following areas: how to teach entrepreneurship; how to integrate entrepreneurship teaching and learning methods into

course curricula, how to integrate entrepreneurship into learning outcomes; how to assess learning outcomes in entrepreneurship, etc. Moreover, qualitative research participants from Lithuania and Latvia's higher education institutions stressed that academic staff in Educational sciences needs a shift from classical academic knowledge to entrepreneurial mindset themselves. They emphasized the need for entrepreneurship competence as well as for entrepreneurship teaching competence.

A number of scholars purport that the question of whether entrepreneurship can or cannot be taught is now irrelevant, since it has been proved that it can (Henry et al., 2005a, b; Kuratko, 2005), and therefore educators should move ahead. While it is not a difficult decision for universities to run entrepreneurial courses, it is, however, a challenge to academicians to choose teaching methods that align to their course objectives, environments and even the type of students in the program. If scholars are able to dodge the question "Can entrepreneurship be taught?" they still will have to face the next question, i.e. "How should it be taught?"

Gibbs (2013) have argued that in entrepreneurial education there should be "a shift from transmission models of teaching (learning 'about') to experiential learning (learning 'for' and learning 'in')" in order to "offer students techniques that can be applied in the real world". The *about* form can be likened to Hollman's (2000) 'academic liberalism'. Courses tend to focus on explaining entrepreneurship using traditional techniques. Knowledge is objective and the aim is for students to acquire this knowledge using lectures and seminars. Education *for* entrepreneurship is like Hollman's 'experiential vocationalism' because approaches focus on the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills through learning by doing. The *practice in* form can be associated with Hollman's 'experiential liberalism'. Such approaches try to emulate the way entrepreneurs learn through their practice. Knowledge is assumed to be subjective and experiential but is linked to theoretical knowledge. 'Learning, therefore, is seen ideally to be a process involving the use and analysis of experiential and theoretical knowledge in various forms of reflection, (re) conceptualization and action' (Hollman, 2000, p. 199). The aim is to link experiential and theoretical knowledge, through joint action with others, to interpersonal and technical skills.

Therefore the following issues are in the focus of this article: *education for entrepreneurship*, which refers to "preparation for a career in self-employment" and *education in entrepreneurship*, which is defined as "management training for established entrepreneurs" (Henry et al., 2003, p. 92). The approach proposed by Twaalfhoven et al. (2001) for integration of entrepreneurship into higher education emphasizes the teaching / practice-oriented student development model, with a wide range of courses for students, business plan competitions, internships, and strong connections with active business-people to encourage students to establish spin off and start-up companies.

Gibbs (2013) moves towards a broader societal model of entrepreneurship, which is especially important for Educational sciences. Social entrepreneurship can be classified in one of three ways: as for-profit organisations which use their resources to creatively address social issues; as not-for-profit organisations which help individuals establish their own small, for-profit businesses or, as not-for-profit ventures which create economic value to fund their own programmes or to create employment and training opportunities for their client populations. The model places emphasis on the values of entrepreneurship and developing entrepreneurial behaviours, attributes and skills encompassing concepts such as emotional intelligence, vision, holistic management and the ability to build trusting relationships. This scenario translates into a need to equip students with personal entrepreneurial capacities and to design organisations of all kinds, public, private and NGO (non-governmental organisations) to support effective entrepreneurial behaviour. Therefore the new challenge for entrepreneurship education is that it needs to address a number of personal, organisational and societal capacities. This in turn challenges educators to develop modes of teaching and learning that support the development of these capacities.

As Collins (2006) reminds, there is no set approach to entrepreneurship education, therefore it is necessary to experiment with pedagogy and curricula in the field of Educational sciences leading to some innovative entrepreneurship curricula and programs. The report (2006) emphasises the need to use experience based teaching methods in order to develop entrepreneurial thinking and states explicitly that “traditional educational methods (like lectures) do not correlate well with the development of entrepreneurial thinking”. It follows then that traditional modes of assessment (like exams) do not facilitate the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours. The most popular teaching methods in entrepreneurship education, according to the Winslow-Solomon (2000) study, are creation of business plans, case studies and lectures, respectively.

*The innovative approach to entrepreneurship education stressed in modern educational literature is creating an opportunity for students to feel entrepreneurial and this requires a teaching methodology which creates opportunities for students to “learn by doing”. It recognises that knowledge is not learning until it is in some way internalised either by application or thinking. Very often, this internalising is achieved by “doing”. This approach creates very real challenges for higher educational institutes as entrepreneurial learning can be seen as a process of trial and error and incremental improvements, something that can be hard to accommodate within traditional academic curriculum.*

## 2. Experiential learning as a heart of new pedagogies

In recent years, the interest in experiential learning techniques in higher education has grown (Melnikova, 2008). Experiential learning can be described as learning that arises out of reflection on experience, leading to purposive action in order to test out the ‘hypotheses’ that arise out of this reflection. This action in turn leads to further experience and reflection, so that experiential learning can be seen as a continuous cycle or spiral within the educational context. This learning can be promoted either through reflection on past experience or through reflection on either planned for experience, such as work placements, or on simulated experience enacted within the educational context. Hence, experiential learning education can be divided into three types: (1) field-based experiences (such methods as internships, mentorship, etc. that involve working with practitioners); (2) prior learning assessment; and (3) experiential classroom-based learning (teaching methods that involve students learning by doing) (Kolb, 1975). These methods are aimed on integration of theory and practice and could be implemented in Educational sciences curricula.

The following section discusses the methods of experiential learning that were extracted through the review of literature on entrepreneurship education.

*Table 1.* Approaches employed in Educational sciences (source: author)

<b>Experiential learning methods</b>		
<b>Classroom-based methods</b>	<b>Field-based methods</b>	<b>Prior learning assessment</b>
Action learning Business simulations Questions and answers sessions with experienced entrepreneurs Competitions (Business plan competitions etc.) Role-plays Cohort groups Case study analyses 360 degree assessment Problem-based learning Networking Project-based learning Videos and filming Venture setting up simulations	Job shadowing Internship Mentorship Coaching Study visits to quality organisations Networking	Reflective practice Portfolios

**Classroom-based learning methods** or *education for practice* offer students techniques that can be applied in a real world. These educational techniques pro-

vide participants with the possibility to study their own actions and experience in order to improve performance. This is done in conjunction with others, in small groups called action learning sets. The methods enable each person to reflect on and review the action they have taken and the learning points arising. This should then guide future action and improve performance. That emphasizes shared authority for learning, opportunities for collaboration, and teamwork in practice-oriented situations. The positive effects of classroom-based learning methods include enhanced feelings of group affiliation and acceptance, social and emotional support, motivation, persistence, group learning, and mutual assistance (Browne-Ferrigno, Muth, 2004). Education for practice methods also provide opportunities for candidates to test newly acquired entrepreneurship skills and receive feedback through authentic demonstrations and assessments. Most educators agree that effective programs feature instructional activities and assessments that focus on problems of practice and stimulate effective problem-solving and reflection. The educational techniques are aimed on reflection from experience. For instance, students and entrepreneurs come together for network seminars to share best practices, provide support and critical feedback, and discuss theory and research related to entrepreneurship. Seminars regularly involve book and article discussions, journal sharing, or subject-specific workshops on topics such as law or finance. At seminars students present their work and receive in-depth assessment of their learning plans, project-work, and portfolios.

**Field-based learning methods** or *education in practice* can help students to explore a range of career objectives and make educated decisions about career choices. The cornerstones of the methods are familiarizing with the practical work according to the annual routines in any type of organisations. The studies thus form a bridge between the study curricula and some practices at the organisation level. There is little doubt that education in practice has the potential to foster entrepreneurship development for students (Brown-Ferrigno, Muth, 2004). The ultimate goal of field-based methods is to help individuals develop internal and external structures that help them achieve success and to increase their potential by expanding their sense of what is possible. Students are seen as collaborators that work by tackling obstacles such as time management, organization, problem solving, and navigating through the learning curve by using support, encouragement, teaching skills, and goal setting.

**Prior learning assessment.** *Reflective practice* is an important process by which knowledge is developed from experience. When reflecting, one considers an experience that has happened and tries to understand or explain it, which often leads to insight and deep learning or ideas to test on new experiences. Reflection is particularly important for perplexing experiences, working under conditions of high uncertainty, and problem-solving. As a result, it should not be a surprise that



reflection is an integral component of entrepreneurship education and also a way of practicing entrepreneurship. Given the nature of entrepreneurship as a continuous cycle of action, learning, testing, and experimenting, developing students as reflective entrepreneurs requires reflection-on-practice and reflection-in-practice as part of a pedagogy portfolio.

*The entrepreneurship literature highlights the role of action-orientation and experientially based learning. Creating a simulated context for student learning, therefore, requires a project-based activity. Pedagogies need to enable a context whereby students do something entrepreneurial and in doing so learn experientially.*

### **3. Students opinion on teaching of entrepreneurship in Educational sciences**

The present empirical study involved 32 students (Educational sciences, Education Management) from two universities in Lithuania (N=14) and Latvia (N=18). Students' cultural and educational experience emphasized the significance of each student's opinion on research question (Luka, Ludborza, Maslo, 2009) within the present empirical study. The group of research participants (field of study and work, etc.) was considered to be homogeneous.

The empiric study guiding question is as follows: what is students' opinion on teaching of entrepreneurship in Educational sciences? The group discussion questionnaire included the following key questions:

- How do you understand the concept of entrepreneurship?
- How do you understand entrepreneurship in the field of education?
- How can entrepreneurship be taught in Educational sciences (within your study programme)?

The interpretive paradigm was used in the empirical study. The interpretive paradigm aims to understand other cultures, from the inside through the use of ethnographic methods such as informal interviewing and participant observation, and establishment of ethically sound relationships (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The interpretative paradigm creates an environment for the development of any individual and helps them to develop their potential (Luka, 2008, 52). The core of this paradigm is human experience, people's mutual everyday interaction that tends to understand the subjectivity of human experience (Luka, 2007, 104). The paradigm is aimed at understanding people's activity, how a certain activity is exposed in a certain environment, time, conditions, i.e., how it is exposed in a certain socio-cultural context (Luka, 2007, 104). Thus, the interpretative paradigm is oriented towards one's conscious activity, and it is future-oriented (Luka, 2007, 104). Interpretative paradigm is characterized by the researcher's practical interest in the research question (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2003). The researcher is the interpreter.



Having generalized informants' answers the following tendencies were disclosed (see table 2).

Table 2. Group discussion results

Question	Lithuania	Latvia
1. How do you understand the concept of entrepreneurship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity to start own business (12)</li> <li>- Earning money and making profit of any activity (11)</li> <li>- Career challenges (8)</li> <li>- Ability to manage a new venture (8)</li> <li>- Personal competitiveness on the labour market (5)</li> <li>- Creating personal financing security (5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity to start own business (18)</li> <li>- Capacity to generate ideas for new ventures (16)</li> <li>- Capacity to make profit (16)</li> <li>- Ability to respond to change (10)</li> <li>- Capacity to make personal career changes (7)</li> </ul>
2. How do you understand entrepreneurship in the field of education (social entrepreneurship)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting new venture (non-profit) (14)</li> <li>- Managing social enterprises (12)</li> <li>- Tackling some social issue (7)</li> <li>- Advance in career (6)</li> <li>- Project-based activity (6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting new venture (for profit or non-profit) (18)</li> <li>- Project activity (17)</li> <li>- Providing services for community (12)</li> <li>- Recognition of social problems and tackling them (11)</li> </ul>
3. How can entrepreneurship be taught in Educational sciences (within your study programme)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lectures by entrepreneurs (14)</li> <li>- Discussions with business development experts (13)</li> <li>- Support from academic staff (10)</li> <li>- Visits to companies (10)</li> <li>- Creating business plans (10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussions with entrepreneurs (18)</li> <li>- Consultations of business development experts (18)</li> <li>- Visits to companies (17)</li> <li>- Internship in companies (11)</li> <li>- Coaching on business management issues (9)</li> </ul>

Both Lithuanian and Latvian students understand the concept of entrepreneurship, its importance in nowadays world. Research participants emphasized that entrepreneurship is first of all about starting new venture and developing personal business. Entrepreneurship, according to informants' mind, is needed for career goals and changes in career path. As Lithuanian as Latvian students pointed that entrepreneurship is related to financial income and profit.

Both Lithuanian and Latvian students would like to get more information about entrepreneurship in the field of education and social entrepreneurship in general. Nevertheless, informants stressed that in the field of education there are a lot of opportunities to start own venture. However, research participants stressed that they

lack knowledge on how to establish organisation (for profit or non-profit and what is the difference between them), how to manage its activity. Therefore respondents wished to have consultations with business development experts on the issues of establishment of organisation, budget management, administration etc. Moreover, students expressed the demand for project management competences.

Both Lithuanian and Latvian research participants emphasized that entrepreneurship is not being developed sufficiently during their studies. They expressed a wish for more practice-oriented teaching methods. Moreover, students wished to be given lectures by successful local entrepreneurs, i.e. owners of for-profit or non-profit public organisations as well as enterprise development experts (lawyers, financial managers, etc.). Respondents mentioned that visits to start up companies would be very useful. They would like to take part in seminars organized by Business incubators, Science and technology parks etc. Research participants emphasized that during the study process they would be interested in creating business plans with the support of academic staff and successful entrepreneurs. They would like to get comments on their business plans from practising business development experts in order to make their plans more feasible. They would also like to get practical experience and tools for starting their own business. Creating a business plan would have resulted in students being enthusiastic and highly motivated. Practice-based pedagogies would give them the empowering experience needed for developing entrepreneurial skills.

*Research participants demonstrated high interest in the issue of entrepreneurship. Both Lithuanian and Latvian students expressed a certain need for more information about entrepreneurship in general and social entrepreneurship in particular. Informants stressed that they would like to learn more about the opportunities to start own ventures (no matter for-profit or non-profit) in the field of education. Therefore during the study process they would like to get practical experience and tools for starting their own business. The most valuable approaches – lectures by experienced entrepreneurs, consultations by business development experts – were mentioned as in Lithuania as in Latvia.*

## **Implications**

Lithuania and Latvia need a coherent model of integration of entrepreneurship into Education sciences, however, the model cannot be just copied from some other European Union country due to: Baltic countries have certain traditions in higher education that are presupposed by historical background and transition period; entrepreneurship in non-business studies, especially in Education sciences is a new issue for all European Union countries; in Baltic countries Education sciences are currently under pressure and are forced to change their conservative purpose and

compete with other branches of science in research, preparation of graduates, arrangement of study process etc.

Experiential learning has risen to the forefront of entrepreneurship education, as universities respond to research that encourages both real-world projects and extracurricular learning activities to better teach entrepreneurship, such as internships, business plan competitions etc. Therefore the methods of experiential learning could become a basis for developing entrepreneurship teaching pedagogies in Educational sciences. Education for and in enterprise provides students with a learning environment that would support them in their endeavour.

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## **VERSLUMO INTEGRAVIMAS Į AUKŠTĄJĮ MOKSLĄ (EDUKOLOGIJA) LIETUVOJE IR LATVIJOJE: NAUJOSIOS PEDAGOGIKOS PLĖTOJIMO METODAI**

**Julija Melnikova, Jėlena Zaščerinska**

### **S a n t r a u k a**

Šio straipsnio tikslas – apžvelgti verslumo integravimą į aukštąjį mokslą (edukologiją) Lietuvoje ir Latvijoje. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami iššūkiai, su kuriais susiduriama mokant verslumo. Analizuojama, kaip pedagogikos srityje sukurti mokymo(si) aplinką, kurioje atsikartotų verslumo aspektai. Straipsnyje pristatomas empirinis tyrimas, kuriuo išanalizuota 32 studentų nuomonė apie verslumą edukologijos mokslo srityje. Straipsnis gali būti naudingas universitetų dėstytojams, kurie siekia efektyviai mokyti studentus, ketinančius tapti sėkmingais verslininkais.

**PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** verslumas, verslumo mokymo metodai, aukštasis mokslas, edukologija.